

Andrew Jackson to Willie Blount, December 21, 1812, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO WILLIE BLOUNT.

Headquarters Nashville December 21st 1812

It is with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction that the Maj. Genl. in behalf of himself and the brave volunteers whom he has the honor to command, acknowledges the receipt of your Excellency's polite and highly flattering address, which he has caused to be read in General orders on the 19th. Inst.

They feel much gratified that their conduct both in camp, and on parade, has merited the approbation of your Excellency; and, they cherish a belief, that they never will so far forget themselves, the state of which they have the honor to be citisens, and the cause which has elicited the spark of patriotism from every bosom of the volunteers, as to act in any way derogatory to the strictest rules of military discipline and subordination. It is true, that the volunteers have experienced hardships and privations in the camp, and have been exposed to the "severity of the severest cold weather ever known here for years past;" and, that too, without a murmer; but, these hardships, as great as they may seem to be, are but inconsiderable, when compared to those which they are willing to endure, when required for the benefit of the service. We have changed the garb of citisens for that of soldiers; but, in doing this, we hope none of us have changed our principles, for, let it ever be recollected as an invariable rule, that good citizens make good soldiers. The volunteers have drawn their swords, and showldered their muskets, for no other purpose than that of defending their country against the hostile attacts of their enemies, the British, and their savage and barbarous allies, the Indians, and may they never be returned to their

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scabbards until the enemies of America of every denomination, be humbled in the dust, and constrained to acknowledge that, which has been so often, and so long demanded by amicable negociation— *Justice* . We flatter ourselves that your Excellency, will do us the justice to believe, that there is not an individual among the volunteers, who would not prefer perishing in the field of battle; who would not cheerfully yield his life in the defence of his country, than return to the bosom of his family and his friends covered with shame, ignominy and disgrace.

Perish our friends, perish our wives, perish our children, (the dearest pledges of heaven)—nay, perish *all* terrestrial considerations, but, let the honor and fame of a volunteer-soldier be untarnished and immaculate. We now enjoy *liberties* , political, civil and religious that no other nation on earth possess; may we never survive them! *No* , rather let us, perish in maintaining them, and if we must yield, where is the man that would not prefer being buried in the ruins of his country, than live the ignominious slave of haughty lords and unfeeling Tyrants. We hope that your Excellency, shall never have occasion to blush for the honor of Tennessee.

Your Excellency, will not call it presumption, when the volunteers say that it is their full determination to return covered with laurels, or die endeavoring to gather them in the bloody field of Mars. Accept from the Genl., for himself and the volunteers, the homage of the highest confidence and respect.